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"The Institute has visibility abroad, which gives the students the chance to grow more and become known internationally"

Why, what, how and where: an alumna takes stock of her experience as a predoctoral researcher at IMDEA Networks

We interview one of the members of our Alumni Network, Dr. Elli Zavou, during her recent visit to IMDEA Networks. Elli obtained her PhD from IMDEA Networks and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid back in September 2016 and is now a Software Developer at StratioBD in Madrid.

Why did you decide to pursue a PhD?

I decided to start with the PhD because I wanted to continue my studies. I had finished my first degree in Cyprus and I felt that I wanted to learn more and stay in academia for the moment. I was interested in the Computer Science field in general and in Networks in particular, so I ended up here.

What would you highlight about your time as a PhD student at IMDEA Networks?

My experience as a PhD student at IMDEA has had two main factors of impact in my life, let's say. On the one side studying in such an international environment and with a supervisor that is well known in his area and a lot of colleagues that have experience in Academia and in Computer Science and Networks, specifically, was very rewarding and it opened a world of opportunities to me for research. I got to meet a lot of people from other universities and prestigious professors that gave me their opinion about what I was working on, so I had the visibility and I think that the Institute also has a visibility abroad, which gives the students the chance to grow more and become known internationally. But also in terms of the lifestyle, the lifestyle experience and living in a city like Madrid, being in the Mediterranean and in a culture that is very friendly and makes you feel welcome. It was very rewarding also for me as a person to complete who I am and have a lot of friends and social experiences as well.

Do you feel your time at IMDEA Networks prepared you well for your professional career?

My time at IMDEA networks has definitely helped me to prepare for a professional career. Because having to work towards finishing

a research proposal and defending your work as a PhD is something that you have to learn. To be very patient you have to keep yourself motivated and be able to defend your ideas and your work. It's something that has made me more mature and helped me to be more professional. My experience at the different conferences I attended and talking to other researchers has made me better able to present and defend my ideas from a technical point of view. All the things that I've

learnt and the critical thinking and, in my case, the mathematical background that I had to build and work more on, it has helped me to continue in this area and in an industrial environment and be able to develop more ideas and even change somehow a field of work without a lot of difficulty.

Have you moved into industry, academia or the research sector?

After finishing my PhD I decided to stay in academia for a bit. I did a postdoc in France but I changed my subject of research so I tried to go towards something more applied because I wanted to broaden my area of expertise and get more experience and learn more working now in the industry. I am still in a related field because I'm working in Big Data. So in general, I am still in Computer Science but I'm doing more of a consulting job and I'm still learning a lot so it feels really rewarding. I think that my experience of research has really helped me to be able to do what I'm doing now.

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About Us

IMDEA Networks Institute is a **research organization on computer and communication networks** whose multinational team is engaged in cutting-edge fundamental science and technology. As a growing, English-speaking institute located in Madrid, Spain, IMDEA Networks offers a unique opportunity for pioneering scientists to develop their ideas. IMDEA Networks has established itself internationally at the forefront in the **development of future network principles and technologies.** Our **team** of highly-reputed researchers is designing and creating today the networks of tomorrow.

Some keywords that define us: *5G, Big Data, blockchains and distributed ledgers, cloud computing, content-delivery networks, data analytics, energy-efficient networks, fog and edge computing, indoor positioning, Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning, millimeter-wave communication, mobile computing, network economics, network measurements, network security, networked systems, network protocols and algorithms, network virtualization (software defined networks – SDN and network function virtualization – NFV), privacy, social networks, underwater networks, vehicular networks, wireless networks and more...*

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